

What is a Team?

First, let's clarify what a team is not. A team is not simply a collection of people who have a single purpose, such as a group, committee, or task force. A team is not simply a group of people who report to the same dentist or coordinator. A team is not simply some people who enjoy working together.

To be a team, members must:

- Have a reason for working together – provide dental care for patients, teach patients and the community-at-large about maintenance of oral health, earn a living, and enjoy profits.
- Coordinate activities to accomplish tasks and fulfill the Dr.'s vision for his/her practice—business staff and clinical staff.
- Be interdependent. Committed to synergism. Actions of individuals working together cooperatively produce an effect greater than their independent efforts done separately can produce. Must present a "common front" to patients.
- Be accountable as a unit – focus on prevention of errors rather than placing blame. Total quality and constant improvement are watchwords.

Understanding Teamwork

A dental team is a group of persons, usually three or more, who have shaped and now share common practice related goals, business and clinical systems, culture, and have a heightened appreciation of each other's skills.

A dental practice team is linked together by commitment, camaraderie, cooperation, and a drive for excellence in serving patients.

As teamwork is defined, emphasized, and worked these factors become apparent in the dental office:

- Creativity is enhanced.
- Innovation is encouraged.
- Individual effort is focused.
- Enthusiasm abounds.
- The practice aura is peaceful, productive, and feels good to the patients and the dental team.